

CALIFORNIA WATER PLAN UPDATE 2009
REGIONAL TRIBAL WATER PLENARY MEETING #6
Lower Colorado River Waters

hosted by the Environmental Protection Office of the Colorado River Indian Tribes
May 27, 2009
BlueWater Resort and Casino, Parker, AZ

MEETING SUMMARY

Table of Contents

(1) Opening Prayer and Welcome	1
(2) The California Water Plan Update 2009 and Tribal Engagement.....	1
(3) <u>Discussion</u> – Key Water Issues in the Region	2
(4) Closing Remarks.....	4
(5) Attendance	4

(1) Opening Prayer and Welcome

California Department of Water Resources Tribal Liaison Barbara Cross opened the meeting with introductions by everyone present, then a brief summary of the context for this Regional Tribal Plenary Session.

This is the sixth of seven regional Tribal meetings being held to identify the major water issues of Tribes in regions throughout California. These issues will be incorporated into the California Water Plan Update, and will also be considered for discussion in an upcoming California Tribal Water Summit. Proceedings of this Summit will be incorporated into the California Water Plan Update 2009, which will be finalized by the end of 2009.

The CWP Update 2009 is the 8th in a series of updates of the original 1957 California Water Plan. It is a long-range strategic reports on California's water resources and uses and related information intended for use by legislative bodies in making better-informed water management decisions, for educational uses, and for the general public.

(2) The California Water Plan Update 2009 and Tribal Engagement

Along with a short video by the CWP Update 2009 manager Kamyar Guivetchi, Barbara described Tribal participation to date in the California Water Plan Update 2009 process since late 2007. CWP Update 2009 includes the formation of a Tribal Communication Committee, which in 2008 developed a Tribal Communication Plan for this process. Elements of the Tribal

Communication Plan have been incorporated into the draft CWP Update 2009, and include the convening of a statewide Tribal Water Summit. The water issues, and proposed solutions, developed in each of the seven Regional Tribal Plenary Sessions are being organized into mind maps for graphical display.

Tribes have been invited to submit traditional water stories to be included in the CWP Update 2009. These are intended to convey the cultural and spiritual values of water to the non-Native readers of the CWP Update 2009. Tribes and individuals are invited and encouraged to submit water stories in media of their choice (written, audio, video).

(3) Discussion – Key Water Issues in the Region

1. Water Rights

Lower Colorado River Tribes established their water rights from 2006 forward, based on the 1962 decision *Arizona vs. California*. There are restrictions which limit the ability of Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) to use water for marketing, off-reservation, and interstate transfers. The California system of water rights and primary holder Metropolitan Water District of Southern California prevent Tribes from moving water to meet their needs. [need help to better characterizing this issue]

Solution: [What is the desired outcome?] Negotiate with MWD to maximize Tribal benefits through temporary transfers.

2. Hexavalent Chromium

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company discharged about 6 million gallons per year of untreated wastewater containing chromium VI from the Topock Compressor Station to a dry streambed that feeds into the Colorado River, about 15 miles southeast of Needles, California. Since 1964, PG&E has taken measures to monitor and mitigate the spread of a chromium plume in the ground water, approaching the river. Tribal, California and Arizona state officials, federal, and local governments are watching closely.

Hexavalent chromium:

- Affects sacred lands
- Remedies are intrusive
- Has adverse impacts on cultural resources
- Has cumulative impacts on the ground water plume
- Must be kept out of the river

Solution: Keep the chromium VI plume from reaching the Colorado River, and remove the imminent and future threat of the advancing plume.

Solutions: Consultation with Tribes to deal with cultural and other issues, including minimizing damage to spiritual sites.

3. **Parker Strip Wastewater Treatment Plant**

The capacity of the Parker Strip wastewater treatment facility is inadequate, and not effective for the level of development that has taken place in this river resort area. Some resort development was “grandfathered” in when the Buckskin Sanitary District was formed in 1985.

Solution: Expand treatment capacity to ensure adequacy to remove threat of discharge and damage to the water quality of the river.

4. **Tourism and Water Quality**

The local tourism economy is highly dependent on a healthy Colorado River. There are concerns about adverse effects of bad water quality on tourism. At the same time, there is significant contamination to the river from boating (human contact, gasoline and oil). Septic systems are also threatening the water quality.

Solution:

5. **USBR “Blue Line”**

The USBR “blue line” is not proven. [Need help from participants to verbalize this item.]

Solution: Temporary water bank.

6. **Disincentives for Water Conservation**

Water not used is lost to MWD.

Solution:

7. **Water Marketing**

Seems to be a good concept. Whose water is it? Prescribed water rights of Tribes need to be considered.

Solution:

8. **Need for Clean Water**

There must be clean water to communities, and back to the system.

9. **Development stresses** on the regional water system can’t be tolerated. It must be limited to what the river can bear. The region is in its ninth year of drought, so development is trending down. There needs to be responsible, controlled growth.

Solution:

(4) Closing Remarks

With no further comments, all were thanked for their participation and bid safe travel. The meeting adjourned at about noon.

(5) Attendance

1. Doug Bonamici, Colorado River Indian Tribes DOJ
2. Barbara Cross, California Department of Water Resources
3. Betty DeOcampo, FMIT Tribal Member
4. Dennis Fagundes, Chemehuevi Indian Tribe
5. Cheyenne Garcia, Colorado River Indian Tribes EPO
6. Gary Hansen, Colorado River Indian Tribes Water Resources
7. Stephen Johnson, WQEI
8. Charley Land, Colorado River Indian Tribes Environmental Protection Office
9. Nora McDowell-Antone, Aha Makav Cultural Society, Fort Mojave Indian Tribe
10. Gilbert Parra, Chemehuevi Indian Tribe
11. Phillip Smith, Colorado River Indian Tribes Member
12. Victor Van Fleet
13. Charles F. Wood, Chemehuevi Indian Tribe
14. Randy Yonemura